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CONSERVATION AREA

THE AREA

The Des Plaines Conservation Area has become one of the largest and most used multiple recreation areas in the State. In addition to pheasant, rabbit and deer hunting, the area is popular for summer and winter fishing, field trials, dog training, picnicking, hiking, boating and bird watching.

The Des Plaines Conservation Area is on Interstate 55, 14 miles south of Plainfield in Will County, and 55 miles southwest of Chicago. In 1955 the State of Illinois purchased 273 acres, and subsequent land acquisition has brought the total acreage to 4,252, of which 177 acres is water.

NATURAL FEATURES

The Kankakee River runs along the south end of the conservation area providing 1.5 miles of shoreline. Other water areas would include Game Farm Lake (23 acres), Kankakee backwaters (65 acres), Grant Creek (75 acres), Pond #3, (4 acres), and Frontage Road Pond (10 acres). These lakes, ponds, creeks, and rivers provide waterfowl with feeding, nesting, and resting areas in addition to providing many hours of leisure fishing.

Most of the land area in the Des Plaines Conservation Area is comprised of old farm fields and hedgerows. Many of these fields have been planted to brome grass, clover or food patches to provide wildlife with their daily requirements. In addition, many hedgerows are being planted to provide more food and cover and produce "edge," a diversity of cover for all wildlife including songbirds and non-game mammals.

Some of the fields are still farmed by tenants who follow a system of strip cropping to raise corn, oats and wheat. The State's share of the crop is used to feed pheasants and quail on the Department's three Game Farms, and to provide winter food for wildlife on the area.

Mature oak timber covers about 35 acres and attracts a variety of songbirds. Woodland wild flowers are also present on this tract.

DES PLAINES GAME FARM

Adjacent to the Conservation Area is the Des Plaines Game Farm consisting of 320 acres. Between 60,000 and 80,000 pheasants are raised here annually for later use on public

hunting areas throughout the State and for release at field trials. For more details about the site, contact Superintendent, Des Plaines Game Farm, Rural Route #3, Box 189, Wilmington, Illinois 60481, phone 815/476-6741.

FACILITIES

Field Trials: The Des Plaines Conservation Area is heavily used for field trials during the spring, summer and fall seasons, and as a Dog Training Area throughout the year.

Picnicking: Tables are provided in designated areas.

Fishing and Boating: There is boat fishing on the Kankakee River; motors are allowed. River fishing gives the opportunity to hook largemouth and smallmouth bass, sunfish, crappie, channel catfish, bullhead, carp, northern pike, white and yellow bass, and sucker. Ice fishing is also popular on the area ponds.

Headquarters and Check Station: Located on the west side of Interstate 55 (off the Wilmington Exit). There are toilet facilities but no concession stand or drinking water.

Camping: Camping is not presently allowed on the area.

Bird Watching: Many different species of birds are found on the area and a waterfowl observation blind has been constructed for your use.

HUNTING REGULATIONS

1. Hunting is restricted to those portions of the area posted as open to hunting.
2. A Check Station is present on the area (see map), and ALL hunters shall check in and secure a back patch to be displayed at all times while hunting on the area.
3. All hunters are to check out and report their day's take.
4. All hunting is with shotguns and bow and arrow; bow and arrow only for deer.

Check with Refuge Manager for upland game species and hunting dates on the area. The area is primarily a permit pheasant hunting area; however, there is rabbit and pheasant hunting on the area after the permit season has been concluded. Deer (bow only) hunting is allowed on the area previous to and following the permit portion of the hunting season. All other species are protected on the area.

Please: This area is for all to enjoy so help keep it clean. Put all litter in the nearest available container. No flowers, plants, shrubs, or trees may be removed or damaged. If you need help or have a question, contact the Refuge Manager.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION . . .

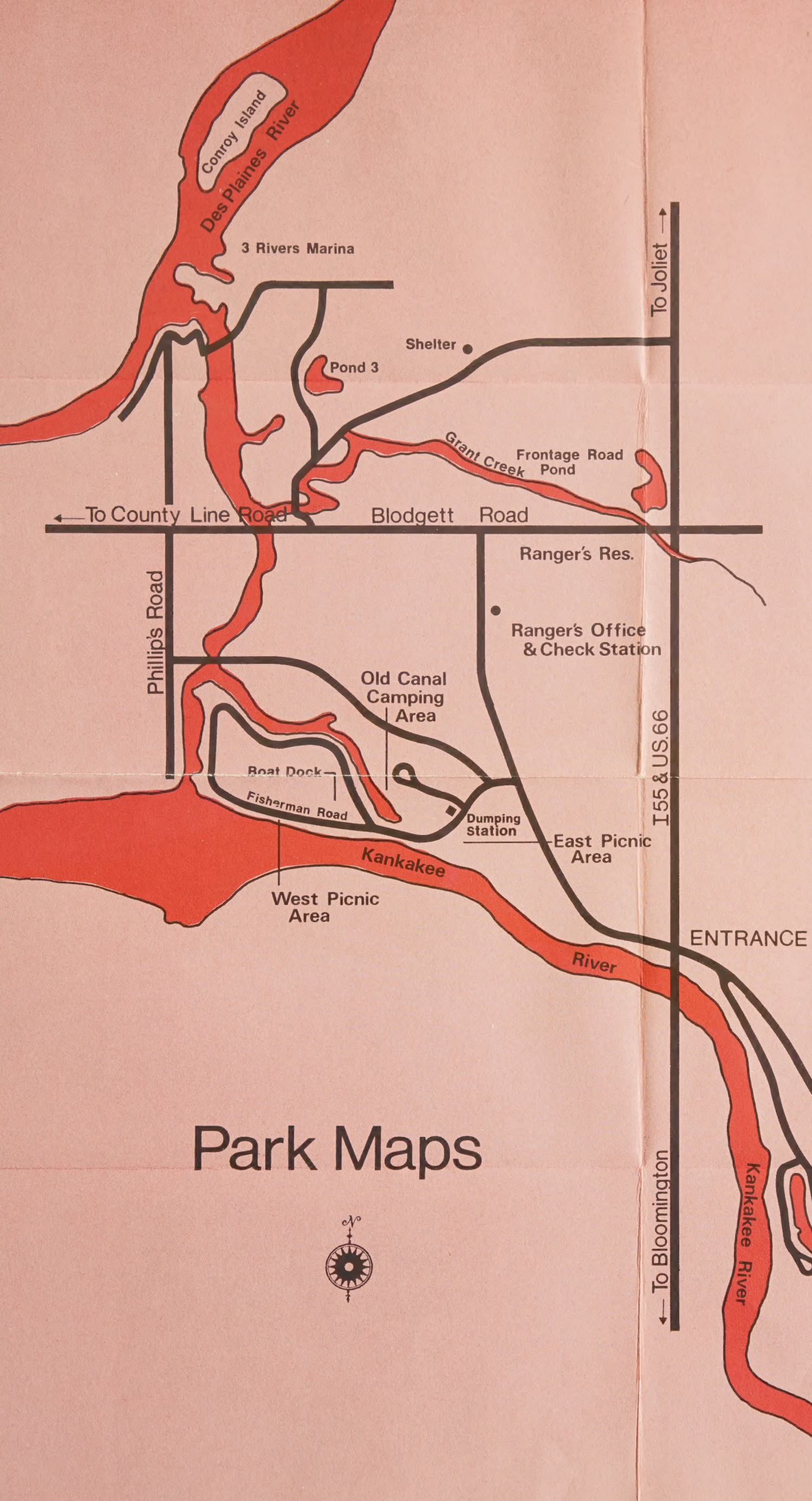
Admittance will not be granted groups of 25 or more persons to any state park or conservation area unless permission from the park ranger has been secured to use the facilities. It is also required that groups of minors have adequate supervision and that at least one responsible adult accompany each group not exceeding 15 minors. All pets must be on a leash.

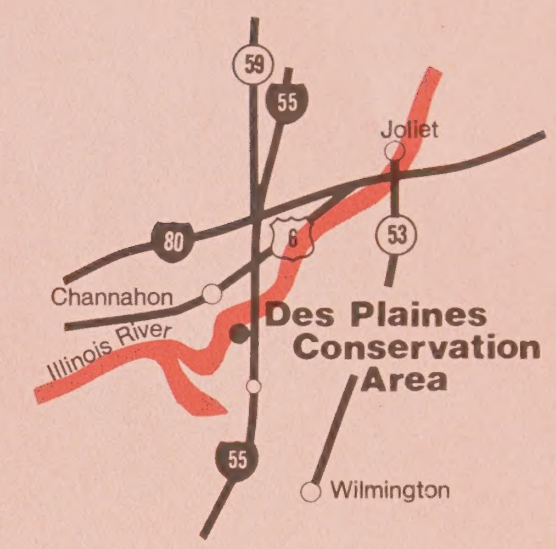
Numerous state parks and memorials are within easy access of every part of the state. Lodges, cabins and dining rooms are important features of Illinois Beach, Starved Rock, Pere Marquette, White Pines Forest and Giant City. Reservations for lodging should be made with lodge managers.

All state parks are open the year round. When weather conditions necessitate the closing of park roads during freezing and thawing periods, access to park facilities is by foot only.

For more details about this site, contact Refuge Manager, Rural Route 3, Box 167, Wilmington 60481, phone 815/423-5326. For information on other Illinois sites, write to the Department of Conservation, Information/Education Division, State Office Building, Springfield, Illinois 62706.

Park Maps


Conroy Island
Des Plaines River
3 Rivers Marina
Shelter
Pond 3
Grant Creek
Frontage Road Pond
To Joliet
To County Line Road
Blodgett Road
Ranger's Res.
Phillip's Road
Ranger's Office & Check Station
Old Canal Camping Area
Boat Dock
Fisherman Road
Dumping Station
East Picnic Area
Kankakee
West Picnic Area
I55 & US.66
ENTRANCE
River
To Bloomington
Kankakee River
Milliken Lake
River Road
District Wildlife Manager's Office
Game Farm
To Wilmington
Rt.53
To Joliet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Joliet
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Illinois River
Des Plaines Conservation Area
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Wilmington

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